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NOTICE

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Communications on Editorial matters should be addressed "The Editor," and those on business "The Manager," and not to individuals by name.

All letters for publication should be written on one side of the paper only.

BIRTH.—At Foochow, on the 18th inst., the wife of T. FATHERBERG, of a son, who survived his birth only a few hours.

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, SEPTEMBER 20th, 1975.

The crisis of the shrew system in this colony and the ports of China have been often discussed upon, and propositions made for their abolition, but as yet no serious effort has been made to shake off this Old Man of the Sea from the back of foreign trade.

The system still flourishes in almost its pristine vigour, and the chopping and artificial depreciation of dollars goes on unchecked. It is still impossible to get Chinese to accept a coin several grains finer than the rude Mexican at par; the American and Japanese trade dollars, though confessedly superior in value to the Mexicans, are only taken at a discount. Nor is this the case in Hongkong and the China ports; bitter complaints of the same thing come from the land of the Rising Sun. In the last issue of the *Tobio* follows an indignant native writer's follow on the exchange question:—

"At present these Chinamen manage the money market solely for their own profit. The compradors and shroffs in the foreign banks pay out all kinds of silver dollars at full market price, and when the same dollars are returned to the bank, they will always reject a portion of them, and when those rejected dollars are sold to the money-changers at a great discount they are carried quickly back to the bank and again paid out to customers at the full rate. In this way the Chinese exchange offices and the bank shroffs are continually helping each other to cheat the public out of their proper exchange, and the Chinese brokers grow rich upon their spoils. American trade dollars are supposed to be in reality better than Mexican dollars, but these Chinamen refuse to take them except at two or three per cent. discount, and then buy them up all cheap and send them off to China, so making some five or six per cent. profit upon them. The same thing is done with our native coins."

He adds that the Chinese money-changers manage to make the kinasu go up and down in price so that they can buy cheap and sell dear, thus realizing a large profit to the injury of the natives. He suggests that the Government should establish offices for the exchange of money at the true fixed value and stop the Chinese shroffing of dollars.

Some remedy is equally needed in this Colony, where the coinage is in a truly deplorable condition and the inconveniences to which the mercantile community are subjected are great and manifold. It is high time that some attention was paid to this subject by the Authorities. If the Government will not re-establish a Mint, the coinage might be undertaken by private enterprise with Government support.

Yet another country has been practically closed to the Chinese emigrant. Though not absolutely tabooed in Vancouver's Island, a dollar of sixty dollars a head has been imposed on the Chinese by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The feeling against the Chinese has evidently travelled northward from California, and the British Columbians have followed the example of the Queenslanders and levied a poll-tax upon the Chinese. The real folly of this policy is already becoming apparent to the people of Queensland, and it may not be very long before the British Columbians will regret having laid such a restriction on the immigration of a race which has proved extremely useful in the past and whose departure would be sadly missed. As in Queensland and North Australia, the Chinese in British Columbia and Vancouver's Island have for some time been the workmen, the domestics, and the gardeners of the Colony. They have supplied the markets of the city of Victoria with firewood and vegetables at a moderate remuneration, and they have proved the best of all servants in that rough country. The agitation against them has no doubt been got up by a few leaders and interested persons, and will, in all probability, speedily subside. The anti-Chinese cry has been taken up by the ragmuffins of British Columbia, inspired thereby by the ruffians of San Francisco. There is no very large force of Chinese in the Far West of the Great Dominion, perhaps, but the settlers there who are anxious for the proposed railway to connect the Pacific with the Atlantic should not forget that the Pacific railway through the United States was mainly constructed by Chinese labour, and that they may one day be only too glad to avail themselves of the same cheap and effective assistance.

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THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

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